CLAIMS

1. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving collaborative electronic mail messages targeting one or more recipients, each collaborative electronic mail message including a feedback portion in which the one or more recipients can each add comments;

indicating, to a computing device corresponding to one or more of the recipients, both the existence of the collaborative electronic mail messages and when the collaborative electronic mail messages are modified; and

identifying, to the computing device, that the source of each collaborative electronic mail message, as well as any modifications to the collaborative electronic mail message, is the author of the collaborative electronic mail message.

2. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including identifying, to the computing device, the size of each collaborative electronic mail message, the size of a collaborative electronic mail message including all of the content of the collaborative electronic mail message.

3.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 1, wherein the new collaborative electronic mail message includes an identifier of a location at an application server where the content of the new collaborative electronic mail message is stored.

4.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving, from one of the one or more recipients, a reply to the new collaborative electronic mail message; and

communicating the reply to one or more electronic mail servers associated with recipients of the new collaborative electronic mail message.

5.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving, from one of the one or more recipients, a reply to the new collaborative electronic mail message;

communicating the reply to an electronic mail server from which the new collaborative electronic mail message was received; and

receiving, from the electronic mail server, a modified collaborative electronic mail message that incorporates the reply.

6.   A method comprising:

receiving a request for a new collaborative mail message including an identifier of a creator of the new collaborative mail message;

storing the content of the new collaborative mail message at an application server; and

sending a message to each of one or more recipients of the new collaborative mail message, wherein the message includes an identifier of the new collaborative mail message at the application server and wherein the message identifies the creator as the sender of the message.

7.   A method as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

receiving a reply to the new collaborative mail message;

modifying the new collaborative mail message in accordance with the reply; and

sending another message to each of the one or more recipients, wherein the message includes an identifier of the modified collaborative mail message at the application server and wherein the message identifies the creator as the sender of the notification.

8.   A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the identifier of the new collaborative mail message and the identifier of the modified collaborative mail message are the same identifier.

9. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein the identifier comprises a uniform resource locator (URL).

10. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein the sending comprises sending the message to one or more mail servers associated with the one or more recipients.

11. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein the method is implemented in an electronic mail server.

12. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 6.

13. A system comprising:

an electronic mail server to receive a new collaborative mail message;

another electronic mail server communicatively coupled to the electronic mail server;

an application server, communicatively coupled to the electronic mail server, to store the content of the new collaborative mail message; and

wherein the electronic mail server is further to forward a message including an identifier of the content of the new collaborative mail message, as stored on the application server, to the other electronic mail server, and wherein the message identifies the creator of the new collaborative mail message as the sender of the message.

14.   A system as recited in claim 13, wherein the electronic mail server is further to:

receive a reply to the new collaborative mail message;

modify the new collaborative mail message in accordance with the reply; and

send another message to each of the one or more recipients, wherein the message includes an identifier of the modified collaborative mail message at the application server and wherein the message identifies the creator as the sender of the notification.

15.   A system as recited in claim 14, wherein the identifier of the new collaborative mail message and the identifier of the modified collaborative mail message are the same identifier.

16.   A method comprising:

receiving a collaborative electronic mail message request targeting one or more recipients;

storing the content of the collaborative electronic mail message locally; and

forwarding the content of the collaborative electronic mail message to one or more mail servers that each correspond to one or more of the one or more recipients.

17. A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the collaborative electronic mail message request comprises a request for a new collaborative electronic mail message.

18. A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the collaborative electronic mail message request comprises a reply to a previous collaborative electronic mail message.

19. A method as recited in claim 18, wherein the storing comprises modifying a previously stored collaborative electronic mail message.

20. A method as recited in claim 16, further comprising maintaining for the collaborative electronic mail message:

a root identifier that identifies an initial collaborative electronic mail message corresponding to the collaborative electronic mail message;

a parent identifier that identifies a parent collaborative electronic mail message corresponding to the collaborative electronic mail message; and

a message identifier that identifies the collaborative electronic mail message.

21. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 16.

22. An electronic mail server comprising:

a collaborative mail storage device to maintain the content of a plurality of collaborative mail messages;

a new request handler, coupled to the collaborative mail storage device, to receive requests for new collaborative mail messages and store the content of the new collaborative mail messages in the collaborative mail storage device;

a reply request handler, coupled to the collaborative mail storage device, to receive replies to collaborative mail messages maintained in the collaborative mail storage device, and to modify the stored collaborative mail messages in accordance with the replies.

23. An electronic mail server as recited in claim 22, wherein the new request handler is to receive requests for new collaborative mail messages from other electronic mail servers.

24. An electronic mail server as recited in claim 22, wherein the reply request handler is to receive replies to collaborative mail messages from other electronic mail servers.

25. An electronic mail server as recited in claim 22, wherein the new request handler is to receive, from a client device corresponding to an author of a new collaborative mail message, a request for the new collaborative mail message and communicate the request to one or more other electronic mail servers associated with recipients of the new collaborative mail message.

26.   An electronic mail server as recited in claim 22, wherein the reply request handler is to receive, from a client device corresponding to a recipient of a new collaborative mail message, a request to modify the new collaborative mail message, and communicate the request to one or more other electronic mail servers associated with other recipients of the new collaborative mail message or an author of the new collaborative mail message.

27.   A method comprising:

receiving a response to a collaborative electronic mail message targeting one or more recipients;

generating a new collaborative electronic mail message by modifying a stored copy of the collaborative electronic mail message; and

communicating the response to one or more mail servers that each correspond to one or more of the one or more recipients.

28.   A method as recited in claim 27, wherein the receiving comprises receiving the response from one of the one or more mail servers and wherein the communicating comprises communicating the response to the mail server from which the response was received.

29.   A method as recited in claim 27, further comprising identifying the content of the response to the collaborative electronic email message and wherein the communicating comprises communicating, as the response, the content of the response.

30. A method as recited in claim 27, wherein the response includes both the content of the collaborative electronic mail message as well as the content of the response, and wherein the communicating comprises communicating the response as received to the one or more mail servers.

31. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 27.

32. An electronic mail server comprising:

a collaborative electronic mail storage location to maintain the content of a plurality of collaborative electronic mail messages;

a reply request handler, coupled to the collaborative electronic mail storage location, to,

receive a reply to a collaborative electronic mail message maintained in the collaborative electronic mail storage location,

modify the stored collaborative electronic mail message in accordance with the reply, and

communicate an indication of the modifications to the stored collaborative electronic mail message to one or more electronic mail servers that each correspond to a recipient of the collaborative electronic mail message.

33.   An electronic mail server as recited in claim 32, wherein the reply request handler is to receive the reply from another electronic mail server and to communicate the indication of the modifications to the stored collaborative electronic mail message to the other electronic mail server.

34.   An electronic mail server as recited in claim 32, wherein the indication includes only the changes to the collaborative electronic mail message that are included in the reply.

35.   A method comprising:

receiving, at a mail server, a response to a collaborative electronic mail message;

entering the response as a tentative change to a copy of the collaborative electronic mail message stored at the mail server;

communicating the response to another mail server;

receiving a message from the other mail server of a modification to the collaborative electronic mail message, the modification being based on the response; and

making, in response to the message, the tentative change permanent.

36.   A method as recited in claim 35, further comprising including, in the collaborative electronic mail message, an indication that the tentative change is not permanent until the message from the other mail server is received.

37. A method as recited in claim 35, wherein the other mail server is a home server corresponding to the collaborative electronic mail message.

38. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 35.

39. A method comprising:

receiving a new collaborative electronic mail message request targeting one or more recipients;

indicating, to a computing device corresponding to one of the recipients, the existence of the new collaborative electronic mail message; and

identifying, to the computing device, that the source of the new collaborative electronic mail message is the author of the new collaborative electronic mail message.

40. A method as recited in claim 39, further comprising:

determining a size of the new collaborative electronic mail message, the size including the content of the new collaborative electronic mail message; and

identifying, to the computing device the size of the new collaborative electronic mail message.

41. A method as recited in claim 39, further comprising:

wherein the new collaborative electronic mail message includes an identifier of a location at an application server where the content of the new collaborative electronic mail message is stored.

42. A method as recited in claim 39, further comprising:

receiving, from one of the one or more recipients, a reply to the new collaborative electronic mail message; and

communicating the reply to one or more electronic mail servers associated with recipients of the new collaborative electronic mail message.

43. A method as recited in claim 39, further comprising:

receiving, from one of the one or more recipients, a reply to the new collaborative electronic mail message;

communicating the reply to an electronic mail server from which the new collaborative electronic mail message was received; and

receiving, from the electronic mail server, a modified collaborative electronic mail message that incorporates the reply.

44. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 39.

45. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure comprising:

a distribution list field that identifies the recipients of the collaborative electronic mail message;

a content field that includes all of the content of a collaborative electronic mail message, wherein replies to the collaborative electronic mail message alter the content in the content field;

an author field that identifies an author of the content in the content field.

46. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 45, wherein the data structure further comprises a root identifier that identifies an initial collaborative electronic mail message corresponding to the collaborative electronic mail message.

47. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 45, a parent identifier that identifies a parent collaborative electronic mail message corresponding to the collaborative electronic mail message.

48. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 45, a message identifier that identifies the collaborative electronic mail message.